

RESET

Title: Part 2 – “Force Quit”

Date: July 27, 2025

Transition: Band Continues Softly

As we continue in this moment of worship and prepare our hearts for God’s Word, let’s take a minute and make some space for God to work in our lives. Our souls have a surface, a midlands, but God communicates to us in the depths. So, everyone close your eyes, I promise this won’t be weird, but let’s give God EVERYONE and EVERYTHING. Just say that under your breath, “God I give you everyone and everything...” Now as the band plays softly just take a few moments and give God all the things and all the people on your heart. Lovingly detach yourself from the cares of this world.

[PRAYER TIME]

Hey before you grab a seat take a :30 seconds and say “Hi” to some people around you. While everyone here in the house is saying “Hi” to each other I want to say “Hi” if you are joining us online or on our app, thank you for spending some time with us! We consider you a part of our church family so let us know how we can pray for you or serve you—we’d love to walk alongside you in any way that we can.

If you have a Bible with you or the Bible app on your phone our main text today is from Matthew chapter 11, verses 28 through 30 if you want to follow along. Before we read this, everyone take a deep breath with me. Now here are Jesus words for you and I today:

²⁸ “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

I want to give you some context about when Jesus spoke these incredible words. Because understanding the situation makes His invitation even more powerful.

Matthew 11 has been a tough chapter for Jesus. He’s been facing rejection left and right. The religious leaders are criticizing Him. The cities where He performed most of His miracles are refusing to repent. Even John the Baptist, sitting in prison, is having doubts about whether Jesus is really the Messiah.

Just before our passage, Jesus had pronounced judgment on three cities because despite witnessing incredible miracles, they hardened their hearts against Him. He’s experiencing the pain of offering abundant life and having it rejected.

But then something beautiful happens. In verses 25-26, Jesus prays to His Father and says, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do."

Jesus is saying, "Papa, the sophisticated religious experts are missing it, but children, simple people, humble hearts—they're getting it! They're receiving what I'm offering!" AND that's when Jesus makes this tender invitation: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened."

Here's what's crucial to understand: the people Jesus was speaking to were exhausted. Not just physically tired—spiritually exhausted. The religious leaders of that day had turned relationship with God into a crushing burden. They had taken God's original law and created 613 laws that governed every aspect of daily life. They had made following God feel like carrying a backpack full of rocks!

So, when Jesus talks about His "yoke," He's using language every Jewish person would understand. Rabbis would talk about the "yoke of Torah" – the burden of trying to perfectly follow God's law and different rabbis had different approaches for this.

BUT Jesus is saying, "I'm a different kind of rabbi. My yoke is easy. My burden is light. I'm gentle and humble in heart." He's offering rest to people who are bone-tired from trying to earn God's approval through religious performance.

BUT this isn't just ancient history, that's what we will see today! This is my story and your story too. Because we live in a culture that's just as performance-driven as first-century Judaism. You're carrying burdens in this digital, always connected, 24-hour news world that were never meant for you. You're exhausted from trying to do enough, be enough, achieve enough.

And into your weariness, Jesus speaks the same words He spoke 2,000 years ago: "Come to me... and I will give you rest."

We're in week two of a collection of messages called "Reset" - talking about how to simplify our overloaded lives in this hectic, hyperconnected world. Last week we diagnosed the problem with a message called "System Overload." We talked about how hurry is the great enemy of spiritual life, how we've chosen the way of Martha over Mary, and how our pace is stealing our peace.

If you missed last week, I encourage you to go back and watch or listen because this builds on that foundation. But the bottom line was this:

Your soul is crashing from information overload, chronic hurry, and spiritual malnutrition.

You were made for more than the frantic, fragmented life our culture calls normal! And as we continue this, TODAY I want to preach a message I'm calling:

Force Quit

A force quit, according to Google, is used when an application freezes or stops responding to normal commands and cannot be closed through conventional means. BUT get this next part. **This action can free up system resources and improve device performance.**

That's what we are after today. We want to force quit some things because the painful truth is we don't know how to say, "No." Amen?

Here's what I've discovered: most people's problems aren't caused by bad things getting into their lives. Most people's problems are caused by too many good things getting into their lives!

Think about that for a minute. It's not usually the obviously destructive stuff that derails us spiritually. It's the slow accumulation of good opportunities, worthy causes, important responsibilities, and meaningful commitments that gradually squeeze out our capacity for what matters most.

You know exactly what I'm talking about:

- Your kid's teacher asks if you can help with the fundraiser—it's for a great cause!
- Your boss offers you a promotion that requires longer hours and travel—it's a tremendous opportunity!
- Your new neighbor needs help with their move—it's being a good friend!
- Your spouse schedules dinner with a new couple—it's building community!
- Your kids team needs a coach—it's for the kids!

Every single one of those things is good. Noble. Worthwhile. The problem isn't that any individual commitment is wrong. The problem is that we've never learned to say no, so we say yes to everything until we've said no to the one thing that matters most—an intimate, personal, communing relationship with God.

John Mark Comer talks about something called "the tyranny of the good." He says:

"The enemy of the best is not the worst; the enemy of the best is the good."

We get so busy doing good things that we miss the best thing. We get so occupied with serving Jesus that we forget to simply be with Jesus.

And here's what happens: we start living like martyrs instead of disciples. We're always sacrificing, always giving, always pouring out, but we're never receiving, never being filled, never experiencing the joy and peace and the rest that Jesus promised.

- You become a human doing instead of a human being.
- You measure your worth by your productivity.
- You feel guilty when you rest.
- You think loving others means saying yes to every request.
- You believe that good Christians are busy Christians.

But that's not what Jesus modeled! Jesus regularly disappointed people's expectations. He left crowds of people who needed healing. He walked away from ministry opportunities. He said no to good things so He could say yes to the best things.

SO, if we are going to follow in Jesus footsteps then I have 5 takeaway truths to help us "Force Quit" some things in our lives. Write these down, number 1:

If you don't prioritize your life, someone else will.

Let me ask you a question that might sting a little: Who's really in control of your schedule? Is it you, or is it everyone else who has an opinion about how you should spend your time?

If you're like most people, your calendar is filled with other people's priorities for your life. Your boss decided you need to work late. Your kid's school decided you need to attend seventeen different events. Your extended family decided when you need to be at the reunion. Your social circle decided which activities you should participate in.

And somewhere in all of that external control, you lost track of what God is actually calling you to do with the life He gave you.

Jesus said in John 5:19:

¹⁹ "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does."

Think about that! Jesus, the Son of God, had unlimited power and compassion. He could have healed every sick person, fed every hungry person, taught every curious person. But He chose to do only what He saw His Father doing.

If Jesus needed to filter His activities through His relationship with the Father, how much more do we need to do the same?

But here's what we do instead: we let other people's expectations become our obligations. We let urgent requests override important priorities. We let the loudest voices drown out the still, small voice of God.

Warren Buffett, one of the world's most successful investors, has a strategy he calls the "25/5 Rule." He tells people to write down their top 25 goals, circle the top 5, and then avoid the other 20 at all costs. Why? Because those 20 good goals will distract you from the 5 great ones.

That's exactly what's happening spiritually. You have 20 good things competing with the 5 great things God is calling you to focus on. And because you haven't ruthlessly eliminated the good, you're missing the great!

This is the wisdom of Proverbs 27:14, it somewhat jokingly says:

¹⁴ "If you wake your friend in the early morning by shouting 'Rise and shine!' It will sound to him more like a curse than a blessing."

The point being even good things done at the wrong time or in the wrong proportion become destructive. Amen?

You've got to take back control of your life! You've got to stop letting other people's emergencies become your priorities! You've got to learn to say no to good things so you can say yes to God things!

Here's a practical exercise I want you to try this week: for every new request that comes your way, don't give an immediate answer. Say, "Let me pray about it and get back to you." Then actually pray about it. Ask God if this opportunity aligns with what He's calling you to do in this season of your life or not. You'll be amazed how many things you thought were "must-dos" are actually "could-dos" that God never intended for you to carry.

Number 2, say this out loud with me:

No is a complete sentence.

One of the most liberating things you can learn is this: you don't owe everyone an explanation for your boundaries. "No" is a complete sentence. You don't have to justify your limits. You don't have to defend your priorities. You don't have to feel guilty for protecting what matters most.

But we've been conditioned to believe that saying no makes us selfish, lazy, or uncaring. We think we have to have a really good excuse to decline an invitation or request. We feel like we need to over-explain our reasons and apologize profusely for our boundaries.

Listen to me: Jesus said no all the time, and He never apologized for it!

In Luke 4, after Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law, (some scholars believe this is why Peter actually denied Jesus three times...) but word spreads and crowds gather wanting more healing. The text says:

⁴² Early the next morning Jesus went out to an isolated place. The crowds searched everywhere for him, and when they finally found him, they begged him not to leave them. ⁴³ But he replied, "I must preach the Good News of the Kingdom of God in other towns, too, because that is why I was sent."

Did you catch that? Jesus left people who genuinely needed His help. He walked away from legitimate ministry opportunities. He said no to good things because He was clear about what His Father had called Him to do.

And let's not gloss over this or over spiritualize it. The crowds didn't understand! They probably felt hurt, confused, maybe even angry. But Jesus didn't let their expectations control His obedience to the Father.

Here's what I want you to understand: **every yes to one thing is a no to something else.** When you say yes to working late, you're saying no to dinner with your family. When you say yes to another committee, you're saying no to margin in your schedule. When you say yes to staying constantly connected to your phone, you're saying no to being present to the people right in front of you.

The question isn't whether you're going to say no—you're already saying no to lots of things. The question is whether you're going to be intentional about what you're saying no to, or whether you're going to let other people make those choices for you.

Tim Keller, a famous pastor and author from New York, used to talk about the "cost of yes." Meaning every commitment has both visible and hidden costs. The visible cost is the time and energy required. The hidden cost is everything else you can't do because you've committed to this!

Before you say yes to anything, you need to count both costs. What will this commitment require of me? And what will this commitment prevent me from doing?

BUT if you are like me, you still struggle with how to tell people "No." Right? So, here are some practical ways to start saying no:

"That sounds like a great opportunity, but it doesn't quite fit my current priorities."

"I appreciate you thinking of me, but I'm not able to take that on right now."

"I'm honored by the invitation, but I need to focus my energy on some other commitments right now."

Notice that none of those responses require you to justify your decision or provide detailed explanations. You're simply stating your boundary clearly and kindly.

And here's the beautiful thing about boundaries: they don't just protect you from overcommitment—they also protect the people and priorities that matter most to you. When you say no to the good, you're saying yes to the best!

Alright, here's another takeaway truth:

Eliminate digital distractions.

We will get more into this in the final week when we talk about God as our actual refuge, but let's talk about the elephant in the room—or should I say, the phone in your pocket.

We need to have an honest conversation about how our devices are stealing our capacity for spiritual intimacy.

The average person spends over 7 hours a day looking at screens. Seven hours! That's more time than you spend sleeping. More time than you spend with your family. More time than some of you spend working! And infinitely more time than you spend communing with Jesus.

Here is the truth we have to face by this point. Your phone is not neutral. It's not just a tool. It's actively forming you into someone who cannot be still, cannot focus deeply, cannot be fully present to God or others.

Every notification is training your brain to crave stimulation. Every scroll through social media is feeding your appetite for comparison and distraction.

My favorite author John Eldredge says:

"We have surrounded ourselves with so much noise that we cannot hear the voice of God."

And the primary source of that noise isn't traffic or construction—it's the constant stream of digital information we've invited into our lives.

Here's what I want you to try this week, and I know this is going to feel radical, but create device-free zones in your life:

First, make your **bedroom** a phone-free zone. Stop using your phone as an alarm clock. Get an actual alarm clock! Don't check your phone first thing in the morning or last thing at night. Start and end your day with God, not with social media, news, or email.

Second, make your **car** a phone-free zone while driving. I don't just mean hands-free; I mean complete disconnection. Use your commute time for prayer, worship music, or just silence with God. Stop trying to multitask your way through every moment.

Third, establish tech-free **meal times**. Put everyone's devices in a basket during dinner. Have actual conversations. Be present to the people you love most.

Fourth, implement a weekly digital **sabbath**. Pick one day a week where you disconnect from social media, email, and non-essential technology. Use that time to reconnect with God, your family, and your own soul.

I know some of you are already making excuses in your head: "But what if there's an emergency?" "But I need my phone for work." "But I'll miss something important."

Here's the truth: for thousands of years, people lived full, meaningful, connected lives without being available 24/7. Your constant connectivity is not making you more productive or more loving—it's making you more anxious and more distracted.

Research shows that just having your phone visible during a conversation reduces the quality of that conversation by 30%. The mere presence of your device is dividing your attention, even when you're not using it.

But here's what happens when you create space from digital distraction: you start to notice things you've been missing. You hear the birds singing. You see the sunset. You actually taste your food. You listen when people talk to you. You sense God's presence in ordinary moments.

Psalm 46:10 famously says:

¹⁰ Be still and know that I am God.

- But you can't be still if you're constantly stimulated.
- You can't know God if you're always distracted.
- You can't hear His voice if you're addicted to digital noise.

Number 4, is this helping anyone today?

Ruthlessly eliminate hurry.

Here's something that might shock you (or at least offend you): being chronically late is not a time management problem—it's a spiritual problem. When you're constantly rushing, always behind, perpetually stressed about time, you're communicating something about what you believe about God's sovereignty over your life.

Think about it: if you really believed that God orders your steps, that He's in control of your schedule, that He can accomplish His purposes through you regardless of whether you're running five minutes behind, would you live with such anxiety about time?

See here is what we miss. Jesus was never late **because Jesus was never in a hurry**. He moved through His days with intention and peace, trusting that His Father would provide everything necessary to accomplish His will.

But we live like we're the ones holding the universe together! Amen? This is a toxic lie I have believed for far too many years of my life. That if I stopped producing then the church, my family, even God would find someone who could. It's a lie that everything depends on my efficiency. That my busyness proves my importance and my hurry demonstrates my value.

AND listen to me, I'm giving this to you and saving you thousands of dollars in counseling bills. We often think hurry is just frantic rushing around because of an overbooked schedule. Right? But it goes deeper than that! Hurry is really about anxiety, about a fear that there's not enough time to do everything we think we need to do.

AND the problem is that hurry makes us incapable of love. You can't love well when you're always thinking about the next thing. You can't be present to people when you're mentally already at your next appointment. You can't hear God's voice when you're constantly worried about the voice that says you're falling behind.

SO, here are some practical ways to eliminate hurry from your life:

First, build buffer time into your schedule. If something is supposed to take 30 minutes, block out 45. If you need to be somewhere at 2:00, plan to arrive at 1:50. Give yourself margin so you can move through your day with peace instead of panic.

Second, do one thing at a time. Multitasking is a myth. Your brain can't actually focus on multiple things simultaneously—what we perceive as divided focus scientist will tell you is just our brain switching rapidly between tasks, which just creates stress and reduces effectiveness. When you're eating, just eat. When you're talking to someone, just listen. When you're praying, just pray.

Third, practice being early. Make it your goal to arrive at appointments 10 minutes early. Use that time to pray, to center yourself, to prepare your heart for whatever's coming next. Being early is a way of saying, "I trust God with my time."

Fourth, embrace interruptions as divine appointments. When someone needs your attention, don't immediately think about how this is going to make you late for your next thing. Ask yourself, "Could God be using this interruption to redirect my attention to something more important?"

Jesus was constantly interrupted by crowds, by individuals, by urgent needs. BUT He never responded with irritation or anxiety. Think about it, He saw interruptions as opportunities to love and serve.

Fifth, regularly evaluate your commitments. Ask yourself: "What can I eliminate from my schedule to create more space for God and the people I love?" Remember, you can do anything, but you can't do everything.

Because the goal isn't to have perfect time management. The goal is to live at a pace where you can actually experience God's presence and peace throughout your day.

Say this after me: I've got plenty of things to do... but I am not in a hurry!

Last point:

Choose your hard.

Let's be honest about this: eliminating things from your schedule is hard! Saying no is hard! Creating boundaries is hard! Disappointing people is hard! Going against cultural expectations is hard!

But you know what else is hard?

- Living a fragmented, overwhelmed, spiritually empty life!
- Missing out on intimacy with God because you're too busy serving Him.
- Giving your best energy to secondary things while offering God your leftovers.

Both paths are hard. But only one leads to life!

Jesus said in Matthew 7:13-14:

¹³ "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. ¹⁴ But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

The wide gate is easy to find—it's the gate of cultural conformity, of saying yes to everything, of living at the pace everyone else lives. Lots of people choose that gate because it feels easier in the moment.

But the narrow gate—the gate of intentional living, of ruthless prioritization, of choosing God's rhythm over the world's rush—that gate leads to life! Real life! Abundant life! Life that's worth living!

Here's what I want you to understand: the people who seem to have it all together aren't managing to do more things; they're doing fewer things well. They've learned to say no to good opportunities so they can say yes to great ones. They've prioritized depth over breadth, quality over quantity, being over doing.

SO, today we stand at a crossroads. We can continue living the way we're living, constantly busy, always rushing, perpetually behind. We can keep saying yes to everything until we've said no to the most important thing. We can maintain our current pace until it burns us out or burns out our relationships. —OR—

We can choose the hard work of elimination. We can do the difficult task of setting boundaries. We can disappoint some people in order to delight our Creator. We can swim upstream against a culture that worships busyness and values productivity over presence.

Both choices are hard. But here's the difference: one kind of hard leads to exhaustion, anxiety, and spiritual emptiness. The other kind of hard leads to peace, purpose, and profound intimacy with God!

One kind of hard makes you a slave to other people's expectations. The other kind of hard makes you a child of the King who lives according to His priorities, not the world's demands!

One kind of hard fills your calendar but empties your soul. The other kind of hard protects your soul even if it disappoints your calendar!

Church, it's time to choose!

- You cannot continue living at this pace and expect to grow spiritually!
- You cannot keep saying yes to everything and wonder why you feel so far from God!
- You cannot eliminate margin from your life and expect to have space for divine encounters!

Something has to go!

- Some good things have to be sacrificed so the best thing can flourish!
- Some commitment has to be eliminated so your commitment to Christ can deepen!

The world will tell you that you can have it all, do it all, be it all. BUT Jesus calls you to a different way! He calls you to choose the better part that will not be taken away from you! He calls you to prioritize the one thing necessary over the many things urgent!

You were not created to live in constant rush, perpetual anxiety, and spiritual starvation! You were made for communion with God, for peace that passes understanding, for rest in your soul!

But you have to choose it! You have to fight for it! You have to ruthlessly eliminate everything that's competing with it!

SO, what is God asking you to force quit in your life? What good thing do you need to eliminate so the best thing can flourish? What commitment do you need to release so you can commit more fully to Christ?

Don't leave here today without making a decision. Don't walk out thinking, "That was a nice message" and then go back to the same overwhelming pace.

Your soul is crying out for relief, and God is offering you rest. But you have to choose to take it.

Let's pray together.